

President PHILIP RUMORE



August 18, 2009

To: Michael C. Murray, CEO & President, First Group America
Linda Bell, President, First Student, Inc.

From: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

Re: H1N1 virus

BUFFALO TEACHERS
FEDERATION, INC

271 PORTER AVENUE
BUFFALO, N.Y. 14201
(716) 881-5400
FAX (716) 881-6678

Enclosed please find a copy of our letters to the School District relating to the H1N1 virus.

As you can see, we are very concerned with the possible spread of the H1N1 virus on school busses. There is probably no one place where our students, bus drivers and bus aides are in a more confined space in close contact with each other that would enhance the possibility of H1N1 virus transmittal than on school busses.

The District has advised us that First Student is the appropriate vehicle (no pun intended) for ensuring that each school bus has an appropriate hand sanitizer on each school bus.

We request, that in the interest of students and the employees on your busses, that you ensure that all school busses have appropriately functioning hand sanitizers on each bus.

By working together, we can ensure that we have no further deaths (the Buffalo Public School District has had two) as a result of the H1N1 virus.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this very important matter.

Enc. June 22, 2009 letter and August 12, 2009 letter

cc: James A. Williams, Superintendent
Members, Buffalo Board of Education
Assunta Ventresca, Director, Health Related Services

PR/mm

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June 22, 2009

MEMO TO: Dr. James A. Williams, Superintendent
Members, Buffalo Board of Education

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF 

RE: H1N1 Preparations for September – corrected version

We look forward to working with the District, Erie County and Parents to ensure that everything that we can is done to ensure that no additional students, parents or members of the staff are tragically infected with H1N1 flu.

There is so little understood now about this strain. Hopefully we will know more soon.

What we do know is that it is highly unusual for the flu to be spread in spring. Hopefully this means that cold weather will eradicate it.

We also know that it is particularly prevalent in children. The belief is that people exposed in the seventies to this type of flu have some resistance to it; whereas, our students have no such resistance.

Since most (over 80%) of our students are bussed, sit in classrooms, are in close contact with each other and most importantly may (in contrast with suburban districts) have asthma, we need to work together to minimize their risk of exposure.

Some preliminary thoughts:

- BTF through its publications and meetings will stress the importance of using the hand sanitizer when students arrive, during the day and when they leave. Teachers and Administrators need to set the example.
- We need to teach students to sneeze/cough into their elbow (something very new to me).
- We need to ensure that parents and teachers know the symptoms so that children possibly infected remain or are sent home.
- Since the busses are possibly a primarily closed infection site, we need to have hand sanitizers on the buses and used as each child enters.
- We need to investigate whether a bus driver or aide has the authority of refusing admittance if a very ill child accompanied by an adult comes to enter the bus.
- We need to investigate the possibility of having flu shots available at all of our schools.

- We need to work together to ensure that if it is still young children that are at risk, they have priority for the flu shots.
- We need to work with the media to provide public service spots on a continuous basis.
- We need to investigate some concerns that the liquid used in some of our sanitizers in schools is not of sufficient strength to kill the virus.

These are just a few thoughts. I am sure you have many more.

We look forward to working with you on this very important issue.

PR/mm

President PHILIP RUMORE



August 12, 2009

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To: Assunta Ventresca, Director, Health Related Services

From: Philip Rumore, President, BTF 

Re: H1N1

It is my understanding that you have been in contact with the appropriate County, State and National agencies in preparation for a possible H1N1 outbreak.

We, as I am sure the District is, are concerned that we be fully prepared to do all that is possible to ensure that there are no more fatalities as a result of an H1N1 infection.

Since there is a belief that the next outbreak of H1N1 could come as early as the middle of September, we look forward to working with the District to ensure that everyone (staff, students and parents) knows when school opens (or before) the protocols, procedures and plans for an H1N1 outbreak.

Enclosed please find a copy of my June 22, 2009 letter relating to H1N1. We reaffirm the suggestions. Of particular concern are the reports that the liquid that was in the hand sanitizers last school year, while effective for some bacteria, were of little or no use for the H1N1 virus. In connection with that, we again suggest that hand sanitizers be available and used on the school busses.

At the end of June/beginning of July, the BTF passed a motion at our NEA National meeting seeking the involvement of our National Affiliate (NEA) in implementing these recommendations via the Federal Government and other appropriate organizations.

Ventresca
August 12, 2009

- 2 -

Those efforts are bearing fruit as you can see from recent reports.

As always, we look forward to working with you and continuing the excellent working relationship we have developed.

Enc. June 22, 2009 letter

cc: Superintendent Williams
Members, Buffalo Board of Education

PR/mm